MARVEL

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LGY#182

LANZING
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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

WHEN FIRST THE ***MANIFOLD TERRITORIES*** WERE DISCOVERED AT THE EDGE OF KNOWN SPACE, CIVILIZED CONSENSUS SAID IT WAS LITTLE MORE THAN AN EXPANSE OF A THOUSAND DEAD WORLDS.

BUT AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS IN CIVILIZED CIRCLES, DISMISSAL SOON TURNED TO OPPORTUNISM.

AND OPPORTUNISM TO ***EXPANSION.***

SOON, THERE WAS A BATTLEFIELD LIGHT-YEARS LONG BETWEEN TWO SIDES THAT COULDN'T EVEN ***TRY*** TO TALK THINGS OUT.

ON ONE SIDE, ***SECTORS UNITED.*** AND ON THE OTHER...WELL, THEY JUST GOT CALLED THE ***WHITECAPS.***

TO THE KREE, THE SHIAR AND THE BROOD, IT WAS THE MANIFOLD TERRITORIES SETTLEMENT EXCLUSION COMBAT ZONE.

BUT TO THOSE CAUGHT UP IN THE BLOODSHED, IT WAS JUST THE ***FIGHT FOR THE FOLD.***

IT WAS A FIGHT WITHOUT RULES, WITHOUT END...

...AND WITHOUT HEROES.

GOOD LUCK, GAMORA.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS LUCK, PETER.

WE'RE NOT HERE FOR YOUR INSANE PLAN, NEBULA.

THIS IS PETER'S SHOW.

SO. THE PLAN. YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

FLYING US RIGHT INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHT FOR THE FOLD WITH BARELY ANY GAS LEFT--

--TO TALK TO SOME OLD SOLDIER HE HASN'T SEEN IN A DECADE? AND *MY* PLAN IS INSANE?

FOR THE EIGHTIETH TIME SINCE GALILEE, IT'S A *NO.*

DRAX, SHAKE A LEG.

HE'S NOT COMING?

DRAX ISN'T COMING.

I AM NOT COMING.

YOU AND MANTIS ARE GOING TO A PLACE FOR TALKING.

THAT IS NOT A PLACE FOR ME.

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

IN "A FISTFUL OF MYSTERIUM"

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SECTORS UNITED FORWARD OPERATING POSITION.
"THE FORT."

PETER *SV'LTINGING* QUILL! YOU OLD *FOR'VASZIT!*

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ***KILLED*** YET!

WE ARE ALSO SURPRISED!

MANTIS, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO ***KRAKEEN TORETH,*** MY SERGEANT FROM AN UGLY LITTLE CAMPAIGN ON MORRICON 4. BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S RANKED UP SINCE THEN.

PRIMUS COMMANDER OF PLANET STANDOFF. KIND OF STUFFY, BUT IT'S WHAT THE S.U. CALLS THE POOR SLOB WHO LEADS A BATTALION AT THE FRONT-LINE.

YOU ARE MORE HANDSOME THAN PETER THINKS YOU ARE.

YOU KNOW, I'VE ***ALWAYS*** THOUGHT THAT ***MYSELF.***

I APPRECIATE YOU LETTING US LAND. HONESTLY, I'M SURPRISED TO FIND THINGS SO QUIET. BY REPUTATION, STANDOFF IS A WAR ZONE.

THE BOYS IN INTEL TELL US THE WHITECAPS ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH EXOTIC MATTER.

MET A DRIFTER OUTSIDE GALILEE THAT SAID THE SAME.

WHICH IS WHY WE'RE ON HIGH ALERT WHILE THE BIG BRAINS BACK IN THE SECTORS OUTSIDE THE FOLD COME UP WITH BIGGER SOLUTIONS.

YOU MEAN ***BIGGER WEAPONS.***

THE FIGHT FOR THE FOLD IS LIGHT-YEARS WIDE. MOST OF IT'S A WAITING GAME IN THE TRENCHES.

LOTTA WAITING. EVEN MORE WATCHING.

ALWAYS.

BEFORE I FORGET, I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

HAD AN *UNEXPECTED GUEST* ABOUT TWO DAYS AGO. DROPPED OFF A LETTER FOR PETER QUILL, THE STAR-LORD.

WHICH SEEMED STRANGE, SINCE I HADN'T SEEN YOU IN OVER A DECADE AND I'D HEARD YOU'D DROPPED THE NAME.

THE MESSENGER WAS *SPARTOI.* SAID THAT YOUR ARRIVAL WAS "WRITTEN IN THE STARS."

...%&@$.

OHHH, PETER IS NOTORIOUS FOR HIS DIFFICULTY WITH BOTH FAMILY ISSUES *AND* PREDETERMINATION.

WELL. THANKS, I GUESS. SURE THIS LITTLE NOTE AIN'T GONNA BE TROUBLE FOR ME AT ALL.

BUT FACT IS, KRAKEEN, WE CAME HERE FOR A REASON AND WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS.

WELL, I DID HAVE MY DOUBTS YOU WERE HERE TO ENLIST. SPEAK YOUR MIND, QUILL. I'LL LISTEN.

DAMN WELL HOPE SO...

...BECAUSE UNLESS YOU END THIS WAR *NOW* AND REDIRECT EVERY SECTOR'S UNITED EFFORT TO EVACUATING THE MANIFOLD TERRITORIES...

...EVERY ONE OF YOU IS GOING TO *DIE.*

"WHITECAP" FORWARD ENTRENCHMENT.
DESIGNATION UNKNOWN.

DID YOU GET THAT?

I. DID. NOT. WHICH IS *SURPRISING,* BECAUSE I SPEAK-- HOLD ON LET ME CHECK-- *EVERY KNOWN LANGUAGE.*

LET'S TRY SOME STUFF, SHALL WE?

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY.

IOOIOIOOII IIOIIIOIIOI IOOIOIIIIO?

DO THEY UNDERSTAND ANYTHING YOU'RE SAYING?

MYSTERIUM.

WE ARE ABOUT TO STEAL YOUR MYSTERIUM.

MISTHEAUM *VOR'*CHATH *KO'*DOTH?

YOU KNOW...

...I DON'T THINK THEY DO.

COOL. BUT JUST A QUICK REMINDER.

WE ARE *NOT* STEALING THEIR MYSTERIUM.

ARE YOU KIDDING? EVER SINCE THE EARTH MUTANTS *MUTANTED* IT INTO EXISTENCE, THERE IS LITERALLY *NOTHING* MORE VALUABLE IN THE *FLARKING* GALAXY.

AND THAT MUCH OF IT? IT'S A *FORTUNE.*

IF WE COULD MOVE IT, WHICH WE *CAN'T.*

PLEASE, I HAVE *THE COLLECTOR'S* PERSONAL NUMBER.

WHAT'S YOUR ISSUE? I KNOW YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT THESE *FOR'VASZITS.*

HAVE YOU SUDDENLY DEVELOPED AN ALLERGY TO BEING RICH?

DON'T BE AN IDIOT--I LOVE MONEY.

BUT I WON'T BE THE PERSON WHO RUINS PETER'S PLAN.

OH, IS THAT ALL? THIS IS THE *LEGENDARY STAR-LORD* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

"ALL HE NEEDS IS SOME TIME AND HE'LL $#@% IT UP HIMSELF."

WE CALL IT *GROOTFALL.*

IT CONSUMES ENTIRE WORLDS. SO FAR, WE HAVEN'T FOUND A THING IN THE GALAXY THAT CAN REASON WITH IT.

THOUGHT I'D HEARD THE BIG TREE WAS YOUR FRIEND.

IT AIN'T HIM ANYMORE. IT'S SOMETHING ELSE. AND IT'S COMING FOR EVERY WORLD IN THE FOLD, NO MATTER WHO LAYS CLAIM.

ON MORRICON 4, THINGS WERE SIMPLER, WEREN'T THEY? FIGHTING SOMEONE ELSE'S WAR, BECAUSE...BECAUSE IT MADE SENSE. PAID TO MARCH, PAID TO KILL. WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY?

BUT WHEN I CAME HOME, I FOUND THAT MY LITTLE WORLD WAS BEING SQUEEZED BETWEEN CARTELS AND INVASION.

SKRULL AND SHI'AR AT OUR BACKS, LOOKING TO EXPAND.

AND MY LITTLE WORLD WASN'T ALONE.

SECTORS UNITED IS MORE THAN ANY ONE PLANET--IT'S ALL OF US.

EVERY WORLD BEING PUSHED AROUND BY "CIVILIZATION," WITH ITS BACK UP AGAINST THE UNKNOWN.

BINDING TOGETHER TO SURVIVE AGAINST WHAT COMES OUT OF THE DARK.

WHICH IS *WHY* YOU'VE GOT TO *PULL BACK*, ALL THE WAY OUT OF THE MANIFOLD TERRITORIES. WHAT'S COMING OUT OF THE DARK CAN'T BE STOPPED.

YEAH? 'CUS THE WHITECAPS ARE HERE *NOW.* *THEY'RE* THE IMMEDIATE THREAT.

MAYBE NOT. I HAVE ALLIES NEGOTIATING WITH THEM RIGHT NOW, AS WE SPEAK--

NEGOTIATING? THE WHITECAPS LITERALLY *DON'T KNOW HOW.* THEY ARE THE THREAT TO US--TO EVERYONE.

AND WE'RE *NOT* BACKING DOWN.

KRAKEEN, COME ON. IF YOU KEEP FIGHTING THIS WAR WITH LARGER AND LARGER WEAPONS...YOU'RE PUTTING EVERYONE IN DANGER. AND I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT, PETER.

WE'RE THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY.

IT'S ALWAYS OUR FIGHT.

A BOLD POSITION.

BUT GLOX FORBID WE STAND AGAINST THE SUPER HEROES OF SPACE.

YOU GOT A DEAL.

!

THAT'S... REALLY, THAT IS GREAT TO HEAR, KRAKEEN.

EXCEPT HE'S CLEARLY LYING! PETER, GET BACK!

STAND DOWN?!

WE'RE FIGHTING FOR *OUR FREEDOM!*

AND VAGUELY RACIST TERRITORIAL CONQUEST, BUT WHATEVER.

LIKE, I JUST GOT HERE AND I ALREADY WANNA CRACK YOUR CLAWS, LOBSTERFACE.

AS SOON AS YOU INVOKED THE RIGHTS OF YOUR *GALACTIC AUTHORITY*, YOU MADE A DIRECT THREAT UPON THE IDEALS OF OUR REPUBLIC!

THE SECTORS UNITED WON'T BE VICTIMS. NOT OF THE WHITECAPS OR GUARDIANS OR *FLARKING* GROOT-- WE STAND FOR OURSELVES!

YOU KNOW WHAT? NEBULA WAS RIGHT!

HOW SO?

THIS *IS A BAD PLAN!*

WE'RE SECTORS UNITED!

WE! WILL! NOT!

BREAK!

BOOM

WELL LOOK AT THAT. A *QUILL-SHAPED* EXPLOSION. WHO COULD HAVE PREDICTED?

COME ON. ADMIT IT.

IT'S OKAY TO BE WRONG, GAMORA.

...OKAY, *FIIIIIIIINE.*

IT'S OKAY FOR YOU TO KISS MY ASS, NEBULA.

WE'RE THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY.

THIS IS HOW IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO GO!

GOOD NEWS! THEY TOTALLY BLEED LIKE NORMAL ALIENS!

YEAH, BUT THEY'VE GOT SOME KIND OF- OF-OF-OF--

OH NO.

TECHNOPATHS.

HOWEVER WILL WE SURVIVE?

OH NOOOOOOOOOO.

THANKS, SIS.

YOU MADE ME DROP MY BOOZE. THAT BIG HUNK OF MYSTERIUM PAYS FOR MORE, COOL?

YEAH. VERY COOL.

THIS IS EXTREMELY NOT COOL!

DRAX! A LITTLE HELP, BUDDY?! LIKE, ANY HELP AT ALL?

NO. I'M FINE.

THANK YOU.

I SWEAR, EVERY DAY IN THE FOLD, YOU GUYS ALL GET A LITTLE CRAZIER.

YOU ARE DELIGHTED BY OUR WHIMSICAL NATURES!

AND NOW ENJOY MY MEAN THROWING ARM.

ALSO, FUN FACT I JUST PULLED FROM THE MIND OF YOUR CRAB-BASTARD FRIEND?

TURNS OUT, THIS WHOLE WAR IS BEING RUN ON SOME KINDA CRAZY ROCK. *MYSTERIMAX? MYSTARALON?*

MYSTERIUM. THE MOST EXPENSIVE ARMS RACE IN THE GALAXY. AND WE WALTZED RIGHT IN.

DUNNO WHY YOU'D WANT TO KNOW THAT, BUT IT FELT LIKE YOU SHOULD, I GUESS.

OH, I KNOW EXACTLY WHY, MANTIS.

YOU WANT TO TELL ME BECAUSE BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, WE WOULD'VE ONLY COME HERE TO ***STEAL*** IT.

YES. THE *OLD* DAYS.

OH HEY, LOOK WHAT WE FOUND JUST LYING AROUND!

HAHA HAHAHA HAHA!!!

ON THE SHIP NOW!

OUR SUCCESSFUL ESCAPE WINDOW'S AT 76% AND FALLING--

EVERYBODY ON, WE GOTTA FLY AND WE GOTTA FLY *NOW!*

DAMMIT.

DAMN IT ALL.

THANK YOU, PLACE FOR NOT TALKING.

I THINK I UNDERSTAND.

"SIR.

"SHOULD WE GIVE CHASE?"

NO NEED, SOLDIER. TODAY, THE SO-CALLED ***SUPER HEROES*** LEARNED TO STAY OUT OF OUR BUSINESS--AND STOLE THE ENEMY'S BANKROLL WHILE THEY WERE AT IT.

NOW THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO.

SOUND THE $@&%$# HORNS AND ***BEGIN THE FIGHT ANEW!!!***

"WHAT THE ACTUAL &%#$, GAMORA?!"

WE HAD A PLAN. AN ACTUAL SOLID, WORKING PLAN.
YOU HAD A HOPE. AND IT'S BEEN A SECOND SINCE HOPE'S DONE %&#@ FOR US.
SO YOU RISKED ALL OF US FOR A MONEY ROCK.
IT WAS MY PLAN, QUILL. AND IT HAD A 100% CERTAINTY OF SUCCESS.
THROW YOUR DISAPPROVING LOOKS SOMEWHERE ELSE. WE WON.
AND NOW WE CAN PAY FOR GAS.
SO YOU WERE *ALWAYS* GONNA SCREW THIS UP.
I TRIED TO BE NICE ABOUT THIS, QUILL.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I HAVE A DATE WITH THE COMPUTER CORE.
SORRY ANOTHER OF YOUR OLD FRIENDS TURNED OUT TO BE A GENOCIDAL PSYCHOPATH. MUST BE GETTING OLD.
THIS IS MAKING ME THINK ABOUT GROOT.
I'M JUST SO ANGRY. AT ALL OF YOU.
AND NOW I'M NOT. *HUH.* NICE.
SHE IS RIGHT, YOU KNOW.
NEBULA.

YOU KEEP SEARCHING FOR NOBILITY IN A CHAOTIC UNIVERSE.

BUT YOU WILL ONLY FIND YOUR VULNERABLE EYES GOUGED OUT AND LEFT FOR THE BONE VULTURES.

YEAH, DRAX? AND WHAT DID YOU SEE STARING INTO THAT USELESS PLANET ALL DAY?

A PLACE OF CALM. RINGED BY RUBBLE. TORN ASUNDER BY TWO THINGS THAT HAVE NO BUSINESS THERE...

...AND THAT CANNOT ABIDE THE EXISTENCE OF THE OTHER.

MYSELF, PETER QUILL...

"...I SAW MYSELF."

%&@$.

NEXT: HUNT OF THE SPARTAX

NEXT: BITTERSWEET REUNION

The Guardians find themselves face-to-face with their old teammate Groot! But he's not the friend they remember! Will this be a happy reunion or an all-out massacre? It may be the latter, as the rift between this family runs deep.

EMAIL US AT **MHEROES@MARVEL.COM** AND MARK **"OKAY TO PRINT"**!

ZONE